

CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

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NO. 15.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you—JOHN xiii. 34.

JUST PUBLISHED,

And for sale by the Editor or carrier of the Messenger, a Sermon delivered in the Second Universalist Meeting-house, in Boston, on the morning of the third Sabbath in November, 1819, by the Rev. Hosea Ballou pastor. Second edition. Published by request—price 10 cents.

Text—"O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts." Ezek. xiii. 4.

FROM THE UNIVERSALIST MAGAZINE.

THE SUBSTANCE OF A DISCOURSE,

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."—1 Tim. iv. 12.

CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 54.

A word to the Candidate, and to the Church and Society in this place, and I close.

DEAR BROTHER,—I shall not, by a formal address, anticipate the more appropriate charge which you will receive from my senior in the ministry. The social principle on which rests the importance of ministerial faithfulness has been briefly noticed, and a few of the duties and virtues, which are essential to the reputation and usefulness of a gospel preacher, have also been suggested. You will reflect upon and improve them to your individual and official good. Endeavour to enter upon your pastoral labours with this people, under a deep and solemn conviction of their sacred and extensive importance. Maintain a commendable circumspection in all your relations in life. Be sedulously watchful of your heart and your lips, that you give no just occasion to 'despise your youth;' but by sound doctrine and a good conversation in Christ, 'walk worthy of the high and holy vocation wherewith you are called.' In public and in private imitate your adorable Lord and Master, and you will be a useful example of the believers 'in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity, and finish your course with joy to testify the gospel of the grace of God.'

Brethren of this Church and Society,

—You will easily perceive the bearing of this subject upon yourselves. It requires your co-operation with the exertions of your pastor, to 'build you up in the most holy faith of the gospel,' and to advance the practical interests of pure religion in this place. Your duties, your interest, and your happiness are reciprocal. You will ever extend to him the arm of christian friendship; cast the broad mantle of charity over the imperfections incident to him and to all, and thereby strengthen his hands and encourage his heart in the good work of our God. But a youth, and comparatively inexperienced in the commerce of the world, and in the ministry of the risen Redeemer, you will not expect from him such distinguished services, as characterized those champions in the cause of truth with whose labours you have been heretofore blessed. But you will listen with candour and attention to his dispensation of the word of life, and 'be followers of him so far as he is of Christ.' And by the interchange of every kind office; by the endearments of brotherly love; by kindred sympathies and views, and by a continued unction of the holy spirit may you long rejoice together, and mutually realize the highest anticipations of this auspicious day. Under his ministry, may you ever experience 'how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity, grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,' and thoroughly ripen for the full fruition of 'the blessing which God commanded, even life for evermore.'

SELECTED FOR THE MESSENGER.

"Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord, God Almighty; just and true are all thy ways thou King of saints." Psalms cxxxix. 14.

Such is the warm and elevated language of inspiration; such are the sentiments of piety and love.

The existence of a being infinitely good, wise and powerful, is so strongly displayed in all the works of creation,

that to doubt it, shows ingratitude—to deny it, impiety. "Every thing giveth proof of God, every thing that proveth it, giveth cause of adoration." Let the bold infidel attentively examine the beauty and grandeur of the universe; and consider the constitution of his own nature, "fearfully and wonderfully made."—Let him reflect on the revolutions of the seasons, and the charming diversity they afford.—Let him contemplate the lively bloom of Spring, the rich splendour of Summer, the ripe luxuriance of Autumn, and the hoary face of Winter;

"Or look abroad through nature to the range Of Planets, suns, and adamant spheres, Wheeling unshaken through the void immense."

Will not the survey of scenes, so beautiful, so wonderful, so magnificent and sublime, teach him to confess the existence, admire the wisdom, adore the goodness, and revere the majesty of the most high? Will it not dissipate the horrid gloom of his thoughts, and diffuse the holy light of religion over his mind? He, who will not be convinced by truths, so manifest and impressive, "is lost to virtue, lost to manly thought, lost to the noble sallies of the soul." He has perverted the gifts of nature, and degraded the dignity of humanity. He is unworthy to participate the blessings of social intercourse, or to enjoy the esteem of his fellow creatures. He should be considered as an alien to society, an enemy to man, and an object of contempt.

Although a clear evidence of divine perfection, may be derived from examining the wonderful structure of the body, and the noble faculties of the soul, from contemplating the lower order of creation, and the delightful varieties of the earth, yet, when we raise our view, and survey "the spacious firmament on high," where "orbs wheel in orbs, round centres, centres roll;" our belief is strengthened, and our admiration is increased, we cannot but exclaim with the Psalmist, "The heavens declare

the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work." He who can behold these splendid objects of Almighty power with indifference, must possess the coldness of infidelity.

In contemplating the heavens, there is a pleasure, which to a pious and reflecting mind, is far more pure and sublime, than any other employment can afford. It is a pleasure, derived from the sweetest and most refined affections of the heart; from the affections of love, gratitude and devotion. At the solemn hour of night, when every breath is peace, and not a cloud obscures the serenity of the heavens, who can behold the "blue etherial sky," spangled with innumerable stars,

"For ever singing as they shine,
The hand that made us is divine."

Without glowing with admiration for wonders so magnificent—without feeling adoration for their great creator?

"There is a noble pathos in the skies,
Which warms our passions, proselytes our hearts."

The mind is exalted by their majesty, and enlightened by their splendour. Imagination: and while our eyes are elevated above the earth; we seem to approach nearer to the presence of that Almighty being, "who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out the heavens with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance."

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

The upholders of the popular doctrines of christianity appear to derive to themselves much consolation from the anticipated triumph which they believe they are to enjoy over their opponents, when the scene shall be forever closed upon the concerns of time—when they shall be exalted to regions of bliss ineffable, and the latter, convinced too late of the errors of the doctrines they profess, shall be plunged into torments unceasing. Such consolation may well suit the hopes of that breast where the spirit of this world absorbs every feeling;—But, to the believers in the doctrines of Universalism, is reserved a triumph far more glorious,—far more

dignified and exalted. Though here contemned and despised, and, as far as the laws will permit, persecuted for his adherence to what he conscientiously believes to be the faith of Christ, he looks forward with pleasure to that hour when the veil shall be removed from off all eyes, and his enemies convinced not only that the doctrine he maintains is not the doctrine of licentiousness, but on the contrary that it is upon the principles inculcated by it, that the happiness of themselves in common with the whole human family, is to be maintained throughout eternity. But, his triumph stops not here, those who were his enemies in consequence of his religion, while on earth, will on the glorious morning of eternity, gladly extend to him the hand of sincere and brotherly affection, and, equally with him, cleansed from all sin, will enjoy the same degree and eternity of bliss: for the hopes of the Universalist are not selfish, knowing that the same Christ who died for him, that in the fulness of time he might be emancipated from corruption, died equally for the most bitter and determined of his enemies, he therefore extends to them his love here, at the same time pitying with sincerity the perverseness which prevents its being returned but with reviling and contempt.

Which, I ask, of these characters is most to be esteemed and imitated; which, most corresponds with the example set them in their blessed master; the anticipations of which, are most consonant with what we esteem a truly good and philanthropic mind?

I know that it has been endeavoured to be opposed to the anticipations of Universalism, that in eternity, after the great day of judgment shall have sealed the eternal destiny of man, that our feelings and our views of things will be so changed, that we shall view with exaltation, the damnation and eternal agonies of even our nearest and dearest relatives, as tending to exalt the glory and justice of the most high; but, this species of reasoning, can satisfy only a mind blinded with error, or a heart seared with cruelty. In the scriptures, the virtues which exist in the character of God, and in the spirit of just men made perfect, are invariably compared with these virtues which we admire on earth, differing only in degree, and without the possibility of being tarnished

by weakness, by ignorance or partiality; and it is never even hinted that the feelings of love, compassion and charity, with which the breast of the real christian is now filled will ever be changed hereafter, but, on the contrary, we may infer from the whole tenor of scripture, that, in conjunction with exalted piety, they will engross all the heart of every son and daughter of Adam, as soon as the fulness of time shall have elapsed, when sin shall be destroyed and misery cease.

Q.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

"Are you a Christian?"

Are you a Christian? is a question the most important, and comprehensive that can possibly be put to an individual and it is one, which in the hour of seclusion, when the mind is as it were, turned in upon itself, with none of the affairs of this world, to harass or distract it, we should frequently put to our own consciences.

The enquiries,—“are you a man of virtue?—are you a good husband?—a good father? or a good brother?—are you a worthy member of the community to which you belong?—a good citizen and a good neighbour?—are you a man who loves and respects your God, his laws, and his ordinances?” are all comprised in it; and, as long as we find by an examination of our actions, that we are deficient in any of these particulars, we are not christians! Professed followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, permit me to put the question to you. “Are ye christians?”—I do not ask you whether you follow the forms of christianity so far only as it is engrafted into the manners and customs of the sect to which you are attached, but, whether you comply with it, as it is expressed in the terms of the New Testament, whether, in the first instance, you have embraced it for its own sake, as “the pearl of great price,” your richest treasure and your dearest delights; and would persist in following its precepts though every individual with whom you associate, reviled and ridiculed you in consequence; though, by adhering to its maxims, you were exiled from the society of the great, in the worlds estimation; and debarred from offices of honour and profit, and obliged

to bow the knee at the altar of your God in company only with the poor and the despised; when a darling sin entices, will you resist, though the world stamp you as coward for the act; will you be just to your own loss, and when labouring under the persecution of enemies and the wrongs of pretended friends, will you instead of thirsting for revenge, and seeking diligently the opportunity for retaliation, still love, befriend and pray for them? If not, there is naught of christianity in you; but your religion is of that formal kind, very common in the world, which is worn just as long as it is accordant with the interests or conveniency of its followers, and varied, or entirely cast aside the moment it is found to be opposed to either. This, which is the mere phantom of christianity, is far worse than a total neglect of all religion, as it causes many seriously to fancy for the doctrines of christianity, the debasing imaginations of their own hearts, or the traditions of equally fallible men, and to satisfy, or as it were, benumb their consciences, and finally destroy the peace of their own minds, and the happiness of society, by a fantastic compliance with the requirements of that gospel which in case of a total rejection of it would not allow them to rest easy. Such people, placing the forms in the room of the substance of religion, comply, at stated intervals, with all the ceremonies of christianity; but look into their hearts, and instead of that love and charity inculcated by Christ, they will be found filled with bitterness not only against their enemies, but also against those whose only fault is in having refused to subscribe to the dogmas of men, set forth in the creeds to which they require an acquiescence, as a test of their christianity. Let these men put to themselves the question at the head of this article, examine, without prejudice, the scriptures, and try by it their principles and their actions, and see whether they be indeed christians.

Let us too, who are believers in the doctrine of the restitution of all things, ask ourselves whether in every particular we can each of us reply affirmatively to the question—whether we always extend to our friends—to our opponents—to our revilers, and to our enemies the precepts which our doctrine, above

all others, inculcates, *unbounded love without distinction of persons*, whether we have always, without dread of losing the world's popularity, boldly declared ourselves to be the disciples of that Christ who came to seek and to save all, even the vilest of sinners—or whether we have not for fear of the powers of this world, for pecuniary considerations, or for the sake of ease, denied the GOSPEL of UNIVERSAL PEACE; if we have in any instance done this, we are far more guilty than our opponents, and far greater is our condemnation.

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Christian Messenger.

Philadelphia, Saturday, November 11, 1820.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

To the remarks of A, the author of the Brief Sketches replies, that as to the truth of his assertion respecting the means of introducing the reformation into England, he refers to Dobson's Encyclopedia. article England, vol. vi. p. 647.

Henry VIII. had at one time of life written against Luther, a work in Latin which gave such satisfaction to the Pope, that he conferred on the king the title of "Defender of the Faith."

Henry was at this time married to Catharine of Spain, but her beauty was faded, and her age being greater than his, she created in his mind sentiments of disgust, and he was determined to be divorced from her, and powerful motives actuated him. Anne Boleyn, one of her maids of honor, was a female of the highest personal charms, and her company acted on him with all that magic influence which beauty only inspires; determined to possess her, he hesitated at no means however dishonorable, and resolved to divorce Catharine, that he might marry her. He accordingly applied to the Pope, who, either considering the nuptial compact too sacred to be touched by the hand of profanity, and dreading to put asunder what God had joined together, or else being influenced by a dread of the emperor, refused to comply with the wishes of the king. But as he drew from England much of his resources, he resorted to temporizing measures, and

sent a legate to London to try the legality of the king's marriage; this legation was prorogued on some trifling occasion, and the king enraged at this conduct, proclaimed himself the head of the church of England, and compelled the legatine ecclesiastics to confess him such; this was afterwards ratified by a parliament and thus was the power of the Pope overturned in England.

Henry married Anne Boleyn, and afterwards divorced Catharine! it is related of him, that he wished to know whether he might not have two wives at one time!

Thus was the reformation introduced, and, as we think, in the mode we stated.

As to Dr. Priestly, we wished to convey no more than what we believed his opinion in contradistinction to the Socinian sentiment.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

AN APPEAL TO CALVINISTS.

My brethren, you have much cause for being grateful to God that you are inhabitants of a land where freedom waves her brightest banners, where religious tests are not required on any occasion, and where in the spirit of gospel liberty, you are not debarred from enjoying, under your own vine, and your own fig tree, the religion you profess, having to account to none but that Supreme Being who is the sole Lord of conscience, and from whose throne of glory the light of life, of love, and of unbounded goodness shines with the brilliancy of eternal and celestial splendour. It is your duty as professing christians, to let your light shine before men, to fulfill that command which enforces the love of one to another; this is the only way that can be trusted to by men, of expressing your gratitude to the supreme Being; yet my brethren, I fear this gratitude is never offered by the Calvinist who firmly believes in the articles of the faith of his church. It is true that many, very many of you, know nothing at all of your articles, and are led by fashion, or friends, to a doctrine, which exhibits the most melancholy prospects of ruin and devastation, which paints the great Jehovah, as a Being who calmly determined before

light opened the chambers of the east, before crime had swelled the annals of creation, or one misdeed been registered in the high chancery of heaven, that one part of mankind should be doomed to damnation, and the pangs of an eternal hell.

Such a doctrine as this, which shows that God must have hated, does hate, and will hate forever some portion of mankind, must lead a believer in it, to hate the same object; for it is impossible for a child of God, to love that which his father visits with an everlasting hatred.

In the course of this appeal, I shall drag before the light of investigation, the tenets of Calvinists. I shall put their doctrine to the test of a cross examination; and before the jury of the universe, shall exhibit their trial. Calvinists, you shall see quoted, what many of you never read, viz. your confession of faith, and you will be appealed to, to decide whether these tenets do not savour of the dark ages, and whether it is not absolutely necessary to convoke a synod, to form a new confession, from the only true source, the Bible.

If any believer in that creed supposes me mistaken in my views of it, I appeal to him by that charity, which should be extended to the ignorant and those out of the way, to come forward and convince me of my error, if none are found so disposed, it will be taken for granted that their doctrine is untenable, and the less they say of it the better, except in the pulpit, where there can be no opportunity to contradict.

"OF GOOD WORKS," chap. xvi. Baptist Confession.

"Good works are only such as God hath commanded in his holy word."

"Their ability to do good works, is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the spirit of Christ; and that they may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces they have already received, there is necessary, an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit to work in them to will and do his good pleasure."

On this principle, that no good work is "of themselves but *wholly* from the spirit of Christ," I think it must be evident that, as far as it respects good works, the wicked are on a par with those called righteous, for the good that is performed is not done by man, but by the

Spirit, and therefore no credit is due to man, no reward to be given him, for actions which a superior has performed; neither can there be any condemnation justly attached to that man, who does not perform good works, because the "ability to do good works," is not of him but of a superior being.

This doctrine can have the effect of destroying every motive to good conduct, for if a man acts sinfully, what can we say, but that it is no fault of his, he being by nature incapable of doing good works, and the Spirit not doing them for some reason or other, which we cannot define on any ground but that of partiality. Is not this contrary to scripture, which calls on *man*, in the language of pure affection, "what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Micah. vi. 8. Would God require this of *man*, if man had no ability to perform it?—The confession continues,

"We cannot by our best works merit pardon of sin, or eternal life, at the hand of God, by reason of the great disproportion that is between them and the glory to come."

Here again the wicked and the righteous are equal, the latter has no claim by good works, as by them, they cannot "merit pardon of sin, or *eternal life*," they therefore are in the same situation as the wicked, and do not deserve eternal life. How then are they to obtain it, except they allow that God is *partial* to them, in bestowing what they are not *justly* entitled to?—But see again,

"Yet notwithstanding the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works are also accepted in him." We have shewn that their good works do not belong to them, and the article owns that they do not merit eternal life. By what then are they "accepted through Christ" more than the sinner?—But to proceed,

"Works done by unregenerate men, although for the *matter* of them, they may be things which God commands and of good use, both to themselves and others, yet because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith, nor are done in a right manner according to the word, nor to a right end, the glory of God, they are *sinful*, and cannot please God nor make a man to receive

grace from God, and yet their neglect of them is more sinful, and displeasing to God."

This is a twisting doctrine, as serpentine as the beast that tempted Eve. Let us consider it. This teaches that the unregenerate men may do works, *commanded* by God, and the matter of them of good use to themselves and others, yet are sinful. Now to be regenerate, it follows that they should do works *not* commanded by God, and the matter of them of *bad* use to themselves and others!

But says the Calvinist, why have you not made the distinction between the "heart purified by faith" and one that is not? For this plain reason. Because the faith of the Calvinist is that "God did from all eternity decree to justify all the elect" and that those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous, not for *any thing wrought in them or done by them*, but for Christ's sake alone; not by *imputing* faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness." p. 26, 27. This shews that faith has nothing to do in purifying the heart according to the Calvinist, at least it is no surety of effectual calling, and we still have the righteous and the wicked on a level as it respects their own merit, so much for Calvinism.

ANTI-CALVINIST.

DIED.

On the 8th ult. Mrs. HANNAH BODIN, wife of Mr. LEWIS BODIN, aged 22 years, a native of Middletown state of Delaware, after a long and tedious consumption which she bore with christian patience and resignation.

On the 15th ult. a child of Mr. PETER SAYRE and another of Mr. JOSHUA ROBINSON, were interred in the Universalist Church yard at the same time—and on the 19th another child of Mr. R. was also interred.

On the 29th ult. two children of Mr. JAMES GIBSON, were deposited in the same grave; and on the 31st, the third, being all the children of his present wife, followed them. The five last, above mentioned, all died with the *croup*.

Sleep on, dearchild ren, since ye are at rest,
No mortal cares can reach your calm repose;
And since, to ease the pangs of parents' breasts,
The dying Jesus has for thee arose.